

[English]

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether he is aware that a certain class of aircraft has continuously caused death to our young pilots. The manufacturers have withdrawn those aircraft for further examination. Would the Government of India also do the same thing ? Air Force should be asked to hold back those aircraft and have a full investigation into it as to why it is defective. Aircraft is a manufactured thing and there can be defects anywhere—in the aircraft itself or in some of its parts like engine or instruments, etc.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether he would consider withholding the flight for this type of aircraft, particularly MIG-22 which has been causing a lot of damage to us, till such time a full investigation is completed. Shri Abdul Kalam is a competent person, but his competency is in the field of trajectory missile system. He does not know much about aircraft. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether he would withhold the use of this type of aircraft till a full investigation is done.

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Sir, so far as the issue of prevention of accidents is concerned, we are putting in our best efforts and the Government has also constituted a committee for the purpose.

The second point that has been raised is that such aircrafts should be grounded which have met an accident. I have stated in the reply given just now that some aircrafts have been totally damaged, whereas some aircrafts have only minor defects such as jammed or dislocated wheels. Such minor technical defects are removed and such aircrafts as have met an accident are not operated unless they are repaired.

LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI : There has been an increase in the price of Aviation Fuel during the last three-four years and on the other hand, there has been a reduction in the grants given for training of pilots. As a result, there has been a progressive decrease in the number of hours for which compulsory training is required to be imparted to pilots every year. There are several such countries where the number of hours of imparting training to pilots is determined by the Parliament of that country. It is such an important matter. Would the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to how many training hours have been reduced during the last three-four years due to this reason ?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have got the data. It is true that a few years ago, the training hours had been reduced. However in view of the accidents, those hours are not being reduced, rather they are being increased.

LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI : Please have a look at the question. Before reducing the

number of hours, you should keep in mind that it is a very important matter. As there are several countries where the Parliament decides the number of hours for which training should be imparted to the fighter pilots. I request you to kindly keep in mind this fact also.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I think, you have made your point. The hon. Minister has noted down your point.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, I would like to ask just two questions :

(i) When was the Kalam Committee formed and when would it present its report to the Ministry and (ii) is it a fact that three batches of women pilots have been inducted into the Indian Air Force ? What is the reason that so far there is not a single case of accident by women pilots ?

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Committee has been constituted recently and the Government will try to ensure that the report of the committee is expedited.

MR. SPEAKER : Do you have any information regarding the women pilots ?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR : Whether any Pilot of the three batches of women pilots inducted in the Air force so far, has been involved in any accident ?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Yes, One such accident has taken place.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : We must look into another aspect of this issue. I would like to raise it with Hon'ble Minister and I would also like to know about the policy of the Government in this regard. The Air Force pilots are, instructed to utilise the full capacity of the machines while flying aircrafts because if they fail to fly the aircrafts in the same way during war, the capacity of the machines remains under utilized. Sir, in Civil Aviation Sector also, safety is given utmost importance and in the case of Defence aircrafts, we pay attention to fulfilling our objectives. Hence when the full capacity of the machine is utilised and pilots too put in their full strength, such accidents are caused. I would like to know whether you are contemplating to impose any restrictions on capacity utilisation of aircrafts in order to avert the accidents ? Will you keep this aspect in view.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Member is very experienced. He has earlier adorned the office of the Speaker. He has given a very good suggestion and we will take it into consideration.

Shortage of Life Saving Drugs in CGHS

*25. SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH :
PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government are aware of acute shortage and non-availability, of some life saving drugs in the country, particularly in C.G.H.S. dispensaries;

(b) whether the Union Government have assessed the availability of the essential drugs in these dispensaries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the measures taken to ensure adequate availability and uninterrupted supply of these drugs in the said dispensaries ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) to (d) By and large, there are no shortages of life saving/essential drugs in the dispensaries run by the Central Government Health Scheme. However, occasional shortages which are encountered are made up by resorting to local purchase from the approved local chemists. In case of emergencies, an 'Authority Slip' is issued permitting the beneficiaries to collect the medicines from the authorised local chemists directly, without any payment. Regular meetings are held with the Stores Organisation to assess the stock position of medicines and necessary steps are taken to augment supplies where needed.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Minister has not given a satisfactory reply to my question. He has furnished wrong information to the House. The truth is that at times there is an acute shortage of even common medicines, such as crocin etc. in the dispensaries run under Central Government Health Scheme. At times the patients are referred to Hospitals even if they have minor diseases. You are saying that if medicine is not available, the emergency patients are given authorisation slip. Whereas the reality is that at times the authorisation slips are not issued by the doctors due to which the patients are harassed and with the passage of time their minor ailments develop into serious diseases. Hence, through you, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether he would take any measures to improve the functioning of C.G.H.S. dispensaries.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You have already asked the question.

[Translation]

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : Ever since I took over the charge of this Ministry, I myself was very concerned about the issue now raised by Hon'ble Member because I noticed that we had been incurring a lot of expenditure on medicines. For example, this year, drugs worth Rs. 21 crore were purchased through M.S.O. and that apart local

purchases of drugs with Rs. 21.65 crore were also made. I failed to understand the reasons for shortage especially when we had so many facilities available with us. That is why I have constituted a Committee, i.e. Vaidyanathan Committee. Shri Vaidyanathan was earlier holding the post of Secretary in Ministry of Health and is retired now. I have given him six months' time which would be ending on 28th February. I have very explicitly told him that I would not extend the time. That Committee was set up in August, I myself was interested in finding out as to what type of problems were being faced by the people, the reasons therefor and what measures should be taken to overcome them. When the Committee submits its report to the department by the end of the month, I myself will take prompt decisions in this regard by March itself so that the problems being faced by the people are solved.

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH : Specialist Doctors never visit the C.G.H.S. Dispensaries because of which apart from the patients afflicted with serious diseases, the ordinary patients too have to go to hospitals. Through you, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether the Government would make arrangements to ensure visit of Specialist Doctors in the C.G.H.S. Dispensaries at least once a week so that the patients do not have to rush to hospitals even for minor diseases.

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : I have referred a number of matters to the Vaidyanathan Committee so that each and every aspect of the problems and difficulties being faced by hon'ble Members and the C.G.H.S. beneficiaries could be looked into. The issue that you have raised also includes the point that doctors do not attend the dispensaries and whether specialist doctors visit the dispensaries or not. Since a very little time is left now for submission of the Report and the Report is expected to be submitted by the end of the month. As soon as the Report is submitted, we will take steps in this regard so as to overcome all these problems and difficulties.

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS : The answer given by the Minister is not satisfactory. Is it a fact that there is an acute shortage of life saving drugs, like the dog bite vaccine and drugs for the treatment of cancer, throughout the country ? These are Scheduled Drugs to be supplied through CGHS dispensaries. If so, what remedial measures are being taken by the Government ?

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : Basically, the point is, according to the definition of Drugs and Cosmetics Act, there is no list of life saving drugs. There are essential drugs which need to be monitored. The Pricing and the Customs Tariff Releases comes under the Ministry of Chemicals and Petrochemicals. We are taking all steps to see that the essential drugs are available in the CGHS dispensary at all time.

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : The dispensaries being run in Delhi under the Central Government Health Scheme also include the Ayurvedic dispensaries. Your department purchases drugs for Ayurvedic dispensaries on 30 to 50 percent commission and the drugs purchased in this manner are of low and inferior quality which is why they are not very effective in the treatment of diseases. I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether he has received any such complaints ? If so whether any committee has been set up to look into these complaints and such complaints have been referred to it ? Just now you were speaking about the constitution of a Committee. Similarly, whether the Government has taken any steps to ensure that Ayurvedic medicines are purchased in a proper manner and superior quality drugs are purchased ? If any steps have been taken in this regard, the House should be apprised of them.

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : I have not received any such complaint but so far as the Ayurvedic and Unani medicines are concerned, I am fully aware of their importance and I have taken certain steps also. For the very first time in these fifty years, I convened a Conference of Ayurvedic and Unani Specialists on 19th under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and stated therein that we have to discuss the Ayurvedic, Unani, Siddha or Naturopathy systems of medicines and promote them not only in the C.G.H.S. Dispensaries but also on All India level. A scheme is being evolved in this regard. There are 6 lakh Ayurvedic and Unani practitioners enlisted with us and we wish to involve them not only in this scheme but also in our Family Welfare Programmes on All India level.

So far as the question of taking it up right now is concerned, the Ayurvedic and Unani doctors are attending the C.G.H.S. dispensaries and we are making efforts to increase the number of doctors of these systems of medicines.

SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR : Please tell us about the purchase of sub standard drugs.

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : Yes, Sir, I am coming to that. I have asked the Drug Controller of India to augment the quality control of drugs. We are trying to set up a Committee with regard to the Ayurvedic and Unani medicines which would submit its report. Whichever committees are being set up are not being given long a time to make reports. I am giving them only three months or maximum six months to submit their reports.

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Not only in the CGHS dispensaries but elsewhere also, some medical practitioners, although they do practice allopathic system of medicine, do recommend certain ayurvedic products. What has happened every recently is, the multinational companies have obtained a judgement from a court on the basis of which there is a

directive that practitioners of allopathy can prescribe only allopathic medicines and if they do prescribe even products like a laxative of the ayurvedic system, they may be liable to be punished. The multinational companies throughout the country, through their sales agents, are intimidating the producers of ayurvedic drugs.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government's attention has been drawn to this latest issue; and if so, what steps do the Government purpose to take to ensure that the interests of six lakh practitioners of ayurveda and practitioners of allopathy prescribing ayurvedic medicines are not punished as is being proposed ?

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : I am not very sure about it. But as I know, this was a single bench decision which has gone in front of a three-member bench. The decision is still awaited. We are monitoring it at the Supreme Court level. As soon as we get a directive, we will be taking action on that.

[Translation]

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister as to whether the Government is formulating any scheme with regard to standardisation and packaging of Ayurvedic and Unani medicines so as to make them acceptable at international level.

Secondly, I would like to submit that a number of Ayurvedic drugs have medicinal properties which are being patented by foreigners and because of which the manufacturers and producers of the Ayurvedic drugs are facing obstacles as a result of which our country has to bear a huge loss. Hence, would the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to what steps the Government propose to take with regard to both these issues.

SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Member has raised this question and in this regard, as I told you earlier, we held a meeting in Delhi five days ago wherein the Health Ministers of various states had highlighted this very aspect. We passed a Resolution in that meeting and took a decision that a pharmacopia of Ayurvedic and Unani medicines should be prepared as per a time bound programme. At the moment, I am not aware about the time limit fixed for the purpose. I will inform you about it later. When this pharmacopia is prepared, we will take steps to get our medicines patented. A number of our medicines are being used in foreign countries and we are not getting any benefit out of it. After getting them patented, we will start getting benefits thereof.

[English]

Water Sharing Agreement Between India and Bangladesh

*26. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :